

Suggested Reading List

This book list is organized according to the following categories: history, biographies and autobiographies, law, fiction and poetry, and inspirational stories.

I. History

1001 Things Everyone should Know About African American History

Jeffrey C. Stewart

Contains significant events, individuals, terms, ideas, and social movements through five hundred years of African-American history.

Africans In America: America's Journey Through Slavery

Charles Johnson, et al

A companion book to the PBS documentary series on the history of slavery in the U.S.

African American Business Leaders: A Biographical Dictionary

John N. Ingham and Lynne B. Feldman

Contains Biographies of 123 individual business leaders from early U.S. history to the present.

Black Inventors of America

Burt McKinley, Jr.

Biographies of black inventors with an index of names and inventions.

Black Profiles in Courage: A Legacy of African American Achievement

Kareem Abdul Jabbar

Inventors, explorers, patriots and other heroes. Written for children and adults.

Norton Anthology of African American Literature

Henry Louis, Jr Gates (Editor), Nellie Y. McKay (Editor)

A comprehensive collection featuring 120 authors in spirituals, ballads, speeches, poetry, novels, drama, autobiography, journals, and letters.

Through My Eyes

Ruby Bridges

Ruby Bridges was 6 years old when she alone integrated a white New Orleans elementary school in 1960. Her loving parents and devoted teacher help her make it through. Photos on every page and comments from her teacher add to this courageous story.

The African American Century: How African Americans Have Shaped Our Country

Cornel West (Editor), Henry Louis, Jr. Gates

One hundred original profiles of the most influential African Americans.

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The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours

Marian Wright Edelman

Civil rights lawyer, writes on parenting topics such as "twenty-five lessons for life" and passing on the legacy of service.

Notable Black Women

Jessie Carney Smith (Editor)

Biographical essays on 500 notable African American women

Up From Slavery

Booker T. Washington

New series of literary and artistic treasures from the New York Library's special collections

The Fire Next Time

James Baldwin

Parting the Waters: America in the King Years

Taylor Branch

Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years

Taylor Branch

Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality

Richard Kluger

Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Arrival of Negroes in Southern Politics

Pat Watters and Reese Cleghorn.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It

Jo Ann Robinson

Why We Can't Wait

Martin Luther King Jr.

Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965

David J Garrow

II. Biographies & Autobiographies

Maya Angelou

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, The Heart of a Woman

Ruthie Bolton

Gal: A True Life

Suggested Reading List

Lorene Cary

Black Ice

Sam Cooke

You Send Me: The Life and Time of Sam Cooke

Frederick Douglass

Life and Times of Frederick Douglass

W.E.B. DuBois

Souls of Black Folk

Patrice Gaines

Laughing in the Dark: From Colored Girl to Woman of Color

Alex Haley

Roots

Zora Neale Hurston

Dust Tracks on a Road

B.B. King

Blues All Around Me

Martin Luther King Jr.

We Shall Overcome

Patty LaBelle

Don't Block the Blessings

Thurgood Marshall

Dream Makers, Dream Breakers: The World of Justice

Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks: My Story

Colin Powell

My American Journey

Jackie Robinson,

I Never Had It Made: An Autobiography

Alice Walker

The Same River Twice

Constance Curry

Silver Rights

Booker T. Washington

Up From Slavery

Greg Williams

Life on the Color Line

Montel Williams

Mountain Get Out Of My Way

Richard Wright.

Black Boy

Malcolm X

The Autobiography of Malcolm X

III. Law

Thurgood Marshall: Justice for All

Roger Goldman and David Gallen

A collection of 15 opinions and dissents of Thurgood Marshall as well as personal memories from some of his closest associates.

Not All Black and White: Affirmative Action and American Values

Christopher Edley Jr.

Former special counsel to President Clinton and Harvard law professor, reviews affirmative action.

Race Crime and the Law

Randall Kennedy

Study of the impact of criminal law on the lives of African Americans.

In the Matter of Color, Race and the American Legal Process: The Colonial Period

Leon A. Higginbotham Jr.

An American judge traces the history of early day race relations.

IV. Fiction and Poetry

Even The Stars Look Lonesome

Maya Angelou

On the Pulse of the Morning

Maya Angelou

Phenomenal Woman

Maya Angelou

Baby of the Family

Tina McElroy Ansa

Go Tell it on the Mountain

James Baldwin

Big Girls Don't Cry

Connie Briscoe

Sisters & Lovers

Connie Briscoe

Singing in the Comeback Choir

Bebe Moore Campbell

Brothers and Sisters

Bebe Moore Campbell

The Price of a Child

Lorene Cary

The President's Daughter

Barbara Chase-Riboud

Sally Hemings

Barbara Chase-Riboud

The Conjure Woman

Charles Chesnutt

The Marrow of Tradition

Charles Chesnutt

In the Wake of the Wind

J. California Cooper

In Search of Satisfaction

J. California Cooper

Some Soul to Keep

J. California Cooper

Sister Sister

Eric Jerome Dickey

Friends and Lovers

Eric Jerome Dickey

Mother Love

Rita Dove

Selected Poems

Rita Dove

Flying Home and Other Stories

Ralph Ellison

The Invisible Man

Ralph Ellison

Black Feeling, Black Talk...

Nikki Giovanni

My House

Nikki Giovanni

Long Distance Life

Marita Golden

And Do Remember Me

Marita Golden

A Raisin in the Sun

Lorraine Hansberry

If this World Were Mine

E. Lynn Harris

And This Too Shall Pass

E. Lynn Harris

Cotton Comes to Harlem

Chester Himes

Not Without Laughter

Langston Hughes

The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes

Seraph on the Suwanee

Zora Neale Hurston

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Zora Neale Hurston

Blue Collar Blues

Rosalyn McMillan

One Better

Rosalyn McMillan

Knowing

Rosalyn McMillan

Disappearing Acts

Terry McMillan

Mama

Terry McMillan

Waiting to Exhale

Terry McMillan

Paradise

Toni Morrison

Beloved

Toni Morrison

The Bluest Eye

Toni Morrison

Blue Light

Walter Mosley

Always Outnumbered

Walter Mosley

Always Outgunned

Walter Mosley

Devil in a Blue Dress

Walter Mosley

White Butterfly

Walter Mosley

The Men of Brewster Place

Gloria Naylor

The Women of Brewster Place

Gloria Naylor

Ain't Gonna Be the Same Fool Twice

April Sinclair

Single Mom

Omar Tyree

A Do Right Man

Omar Tyree

The Color Purple

Alice Walker

Possessing the Secret of Joy

Alice Walker

Meridian

Alice Walker

The Wedding

Dorothy West

Black Boy

Richard Wright

Rite of Passage

Richard Wright

V. Inspirational Stories

One Day My Soul Just Opened Up

Iyanla Vanzant

Soul Food: Inspirational Stories for African Americans

Eric V. Copage

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